

provide investments in strategies that will work.

Another thing we have to do is make sure that when we are dealing with the housing crisis, we spend dollars and have strategies that lead to help in the short run. I was one of three Senators who put in the budget \$180 million for counseling. It is not some far-reaching plan to deal with the subprime crisis; it is dollars right now. In fact, the dollars for counseling would get dollars into the hands of nonprofit groups in the country to help families out of this next month, so to speak. Those dollars—\$180 million—will begin being spent in March. That will work. Those counselors are experts. They are certified, and they know how to work with families. We have to invest in that.

I will conclude with this thought. If you walked through the streets of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, I don't think many people would be scratching their heads and wondering whether that was a category 5 hurricane or a category 4. It didn't matter; it was devastating. I don't think we ought to wonder whether an economist tells us we are in a recession. We are in a recession.

We know something about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. When all of the reporting was done, when that horrific nightmare engulfed so many families, who were washed out of their homes and their hopes and dreams were gone, I think we learned a lot from what didn't happen before the hurricane.

We know as Americans that devastation doesn't always come with the awful swiftness of a hurricane. Sometimes it happens much more gradually, over time, when you don't make the right decision and prioritize and when you don't make the right investments. We are not doing that right now. We are not making the investments we should make in children in the dawn of their lives. We are not making an investment in fiscal responsibility to the extent we should. We are not investing in our infrastructure. Maybe all of those decisions can lead to a kind of slower moving Katrina or slower moving hurricane, which is an economic hurricane, or a devastating hurricane that dashes the hopes and dreams of children and their families.

So when we make a decision about what will be in the stimulus package to help people in the short run, we also have to get to work on a long-term strategy for economic growth, investing in our children, and making sure families can grow. I am concerned about how we are doing that or not doing it in Washington. We should learn from the horrific nightmare that was Hurricane Katrina. We should learn from, frankly, information such as this that tells us what will work in the short run to get us out of this mess and stimulate the economy and get dollars in the hands of Americans who will spend the dollars, which will jumpstart or jolt our economy. I think we

can come together and do that. I don't think what we have seen so far gets us to that point.

I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about these issues. I know they are central not just to Pennsylvania and our families but in States such as Minnesota and other States across this country. We have a lot more work to do to get the stimulus package right to help our economy.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL CAMERON M. BABCOCK

Mr. BAYH. Madam President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave soldier from Plymouth, IN. LCpl Cameron Babcock, 19 years old, died January 20th at Twentynine Palms Marine Base in California. Lance Corporal Babcock was killed as the result of a firearms accident in his barracks. Cameron was a committed soldier and servant to his country.

Cameron was a 2006 graduate of Plymouth High School and was a gifted musician. He played the trumpet in the Big Red Marching Band and was a member of the Plymouth High School Advanced Jazz Band. In 2005, he competed at the State Jazz Festival in LaPorte with the Advanced Jazz Band. He was also a member of the Wind Ensemble, comprised of some of the school's top music students. Cameron also played the guitar and enjoyed four-wheeling.

After graduation, Cameron fulfilled a lifelong goal by enlisting in the Marines, telling his family it was what he had always hoped to do. He was promoted to private first class after boot camp and was a rifleman in the infantry. With his assignment to Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Cameron served an exemplary tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a decorated soldier and received numerous awards during his tour in Iraq including the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon and the Certificate of Commendation.

Cameron was awaiting his second tour of duty in Iraq when he died. He is survived by his parents, Jeffery and Ann Smith Babcock; his sisters Kailey, Abigail, and Hope Babcock; and his brother, Samuel Babcock. The Babcock family resides in Plymouth.

Today, I join Cameron's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Cameron. Today and always, Cameron will be remembered by family members, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor

the example he set in serving his country.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of LCpl Cameron M. Babcock in the RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. When I think about the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Cameron's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Cameron.

MAJOR ANDREW J. OLMSTED

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I rise today in honor of MAJ Andrew Olmsted, who was killed on January 3 in an attack near Sadiyah, Iraq. Major Olmsted was assigned to the 1st Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, KS, but he and his wife, Amanda Wilson, lived together in Colorado Springs, CO. Andrew was 37 years old. He was the first American casualty in Iraq of 2008.

Major Olmsted was a proud soldier whose sense of duty took him to Iraq—whose commitment to his fellow soldiers earned him their deepest respect—and whose compassion put him in the line of fire the day he died.

Andrew was also an exceptionally talented writer. He shared his experiences and perspectives in Iraq with the world on blogs, including one he wrote for the Rocky Mountain News entitled "From the Front Lines." The thousands of readers who followed Andrew's deployment had the privilege of his frank, thoughtful, stirring, and often humorous take on the war, the Army, and politics.

For a writer and reporter as gifted as Andrew, it is hard to find the words to properly honor his life and his sacrifice. I would rather let him speak for himself and reflect on his memory by sharing with my colleagues portions of Major Olmsted's final posting. He asked a friend to post this on his blog in the event of his death. In its eloquence, power, humor, and tragedy, it is one small way in which we may remember the mark that Andrew made on our world:

This is an entry I would have preferred not to have published, but there are limits to what we can control in life, and apparently I have passed one of those limits. . . .

What I don't want this to be is a chance for me, or anyone else, to be maudlin. I'm dead. That sucks, at least for me and my family and friends. But all the tears in the world aren't going to bring me back, so I would prefer that people remember the good things about me rather than mourning my loss. (If it turns out a specific number of tears will, in fact, bring me back to life, then by all means, break out the onions.)

I had a pretty good life, as I noted above. Sure, all things being equal I would have preferred to have more time, but I have no business complaining with all the good fortune I've enjoyed in my life. So if you're up for

that, put on a little 80s music (preferably vintage 1980–1984), grab a Coke and have a drink with me. If you have it, throw “Freedom Isn’t Free” from the Team America soundtrack in; if you can’t laugh at that song, I think you need to lighten up a little. I’m dead, but if you’re reading this, you’re not, so take a moment to enjoy that happy fact. . . .

I suppose I should speak to the circumstances of my death. It would be nice to believe that I died leading men in battle, preferably saving their lives at the cost of my own. More likely I was caught by a marksman or an IED. But if there is an afterlife, I’m telling anyone who asks that I went down surrounded by hundreds of insurgents defending a village composed solely of innocent women and children. It’ll be our little secret, ok?

I do ask (not that I’m in a position to enforce this) that no one try to use my death to further their political purposes. I went to Iraq and did what I did for my reasons, not yours. My life isn’t a chit to be used to bludgeon people to silence on either side. If you think the U.S. should stay in Iraq, don’t drag me into it by claiming that somehow my death demands us staying in Iraq. If you think the U.S. ought to get out tomorrow, don’t cite my name as an example of someone’s life who was wasted by our mission in Iraq. I have my own opinions about what we should do about Iraq, but since I’m not around to expound on them I’d prefer others not try and use me as some kind of moral capital to support a position I probably didn’t support. Further, this is tough enough on my family without their having to see my picture being used in some rally or my name being cited for some political purpose. You can fight political battles without hurting my family, and I’d prefer that you do so.

On a similar note, while you’re free to think whatever you like about my life and death, if you think I wasted my life, I’ll tell you you’re wrong. We’re all going to die of something. I died doing a job I loved. When your time comes, I hope you are as fortunate as I was. . . .

Those who know me through my writings on the Internet over the past five-plus years probably have wondered at times about my chosen profession. While I am not a Libertarian, I certainly hold strongly individualistic beliefs. Yet I have spent my life in a profession that is not generally known for rugged individualism. Worse, I volunteered to return to active duty knowing that the choice would almost certainly lead me to Iraq. The simple explanation might be that I was simply stupid, and certainly I make no bones about having done some dumb things in my life, but I don’t think this can be chalked up to stupidity. Maybe I was inconsistent in my beliefs; there are few people who adhere religiously to the doctrines of their chosen philosophy, whatever that may be. But I don’t think that was the case in this instance either.

As passionate as I am about personal freedom, I don’t buy the claims of anarchists that humanity would be just fine without any government at all. There are too many people in the world who believe that they know best how people should live their lives, and many of them are more than willing to use force to impose those beliefs on others. A world without government simply wouldn’t last very long; as soon as it was established, strongmen would immediately spring up to establish their fiefdoms. So there is a need for government to protect the people’s rights. And one of the fundamental tools to do that is an army that can prevent outside agencies from imposing their rules on a society. A lot of people will protest that argument by noting that the people we are fight-

ing in Iraq are unlikely to threaten the rights of the average American. That’s certainly true; while our enemies would certainly like to wreak great levels of havoc on our society, the fact is they’re not likely to succeed. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t still a need for an army (setting aside debates regarding whether ours is the right size at the moment). Americans are fortunate that we don’t have to worry too much about people coming to try and overthrow us, but part of the reason we don’t have to worry about that is because we have an army that is stopping anyone who would try.

Soldiers cannot have the option of opting out of missions because they don’t agree with them: that violates the social contract. The duly-elected American government decided to go to war in Iraq. (Even if you maintain President Bush was not properly elected, Congress voted for war as well.) As a soldier, I have a duty to obey the orders of the President of the United States as long as they are constitutional. I can no more opt out of missions I disagree with than I can ignore laws I think are improper. I do not consider it a violation of my individual rights to have gone to Iraq on orders because I raised my right hand and volunteered to join the army. Whether or not this mission was a good one, my participation in it was an affirmation of something I consider quite necessary to society. So if nothing else, I gave my life for a pretty important principle; I can (if you’ll pardon the pun) live with that. . . .

I write this in part, admittedly, because I would like to think that there’s at least a little something out there to remember me by. Granted, this site will eventually vanish, being ephemeral in a very real sense of the word, but at least for a time it can serve as a tiny record of my contributions to the world. But on a larger scale, for those who knew me well enough to be saddened by my death, especially for those who haven’t known anyone else lost to this war, perhaps my death can serve as a small reminder of the costs of war. Regardless of the merits of this war, or of any war, I think that many of us in America have forgotten that war means death and suffering in wholesale lots. A decision that for most of us in America was academic, whether or not to go to war in Iraq, had very real consequences for hundreds of thousands of people. Yet I was as guilty as anyone of minimizing those very real consequences in lieu of a cold discussion of theoretical merits of war and peace. Now I’m facing some very real consequences of that decision; who says life doesn’t have a sense of humor? . . .

But for those who knew me and feel this pain, I think it’s a good thing to realize that this pain has been felt by thousands and thousands (probably millions, actually) of other people all over the world. That is part of the cost of war, any war, no matter how justified. If everyone who feels this pain keeps that in mind the next time we have to decide whether or not war is a good idea, perhaps it will help us to make a more informed decision. Because it is pretty clear that the average American would not have supported the Iraq War had they known the costs going in. I am far too cynical to believe that any future debate over war will be any less vitriolic or emotional, but perhaps a few more people will realize just what those costs can be the next time.

This may be a contradiction of my above call to keep politics out of my death, but I hope not. Sometimes going to war is the right idea. I think we’ve drawn that line too far in the direction of war rather than peace, but I’m a soldier and I know that sometimes you have to fight if you’re to hold onto what you hold dear. But in making that decision,

I believe we understate the costs of war; when we make the decision to fight, we make the decision to kill, and that means lives and families destroyed. Mine now falls into that category; the next time the question of war or peace comes up, if you knew me at least you can understand a bit more just what it is you’re deciding to do, and whether or not those costs are worth it.

“This is true love. You think this happens every day?”—Westley, *The Princess Bride*

“Good night, my love, the brightest star in my sky.”—John Sheridan, *Babylon 5*

This is the hardest part. While I certainly have no desire to die, at this point I no longer have any worries. That is not true of the woman who made my life something to enjoy rather than something merely to survive. She put up with all of my faults, and they are myriad, she endured separations again and again . . . I cannot imagine being more fortunate in love than I have been with Amanda. Now she has to go on without me, and while a cynic might observe she’s better off, I know that this is a terrible burden I have placed on her, and I would give almost anything if she would not have to bear it. It seems that is not an option. I cannot imagine anything more painful than that, and if there is an afterlife, this is a pain I’ll bear forever.

I wasn’t the greatest husband. I could have done so much more, a realization that, as it so often does, comes too late to matter. But I cherished every day I was married to Amanda. When everything else in my life seemed dark, she was always there to light the darkness. It is difficult to imagine my life being worth living without her having been in it. I hope and pray that she goes on without me and enjoys her life as much as she deserves. I can think of no one more deserving of happiness than her.

“I will see you again, in the place where no shadows fall.”—Ambassador Delenn, *Babylon 5*

I don’t know if there is an afterlife; I tend to doubt it, to be perfectly honest. But if there is any way possible, Amanda, then I will live up to Delenn’s words, somehow, some way. I love you.

Mr. President, our thoughts and prayers are with Amanda, Andrew’s parents, and all of his family. May they soon find comfort and respite from their grief. May we always remember Andrew for his life, service, and sacrifice. And may countless others have the blessing of reading his words.

STAFF SERGEANT JUSTIN R. WHITING

Madam President, I rise today to honor the memory of SSG Justin R. Whiting, a Green Beret with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, out of Fort Campbell, KY. On January 19, Sergeant Whiting was leading a convoy through the streets of Mosul, Iraq, when a bomb exploded near his vehicle. He was killed at 27 years old.

Sergeant Whiting was born in Belton, TX, but at a young age moved to Hancock, NY, where he developed a love for the great outdoors. Justin was an avid hunter who reveled in the rugged landscape near the Delaware River.

Those who knew him describe Sergeant Whiting as an adventurer. It was this virtue, coupled with his deep-seated love for his country, which led him to join the Army just 2 months after his high school graduation.

In the Army, he chose the most difficult path he could pursue, that of becoming a Green Beret. The Special

Forces soldiers I know are the pride of our country. All at once, they are soldiers, intelligence officers, diplomats, tacticians, linguists, trainers, and advisors. They are at the tip of the spear of our national defense. The Green Beret that they wear, said President Kennedy, is "a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom."

Sergeant Whiting was on his third tour in Iraq, on a mission to help bring security and stability to a region torn by violence and tragedy. Every day, he and his unit put themselves in harm's way to give Iraqi citizens a chance at a society governed by the rule of law, free from the threats of sectarian strife, terrorism, or autocratic rule. He served bravely and was highly decorated. Among many other honors, he earned the Bronze Star, one of the highest awards given for combat service, for his bravery and selflessness.

For those of us who did not know Justin personally, it is difficult to know what inspired his extraordinary sense of duty or what fueled his courage on the battlefield. Alexander Hamilton, a Founding Father and an Army officer, explained that "There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty that makes human nature rise above itself in acts of bravery and heroism." I imagine that Justin found his strength in many sources—friends, family, and fellow soldiers—but I imagine that he, too, was motivated by an enthusiasm for liberty and a passion for justice. In his life, he consistently chose the path that was most challenging so that he could offer our country his highest service. He was a true patriot.

To Justin's mother, Estelline, to his father, Randall, to his sister, Amanda, and to his brother, Nathan, our thoughts and prayers are with you. I hope that in time, your grief will be assuaged by the pride you must feel in Justin's service and by the honor he bestowed upon his country. May we never forget his service and his sacrifice.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and withdrawals which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2556. A bill to extend the provisions of the Protect America Act of 2007 for an additional 30 days.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2557. A bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 until July 1, 2009.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4773. A communication from the Deputy Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Premium Rates; Payment of Premiums; Flat Premium Rates, Variable Rate Premium Cap, and Termination Premium; Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; Pension Protection Act of 2006" (RIN1212-AB10) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4774. A communication from the Deputy Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits" (72 FR 71071) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4775. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment to the Current Good Manufacturing Practice Regulations for Finished Pharmaceuticals" (Docket No. 2007N-0280) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4776. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Over-the-Counter Vaginal Contraceptive and Spermicide Drug Products Containing Nonoxonyl 9; Required Labeling" (RIN0910-AF44) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4777. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medical Devices; Hematology and Pathology Devices: Reclassification of Automated Blood Cell Separator Device Operating by Centrifugal Separation Principle" (Docket No. 2005N-0017) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4778. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Secondary Direct Food Additives Permitted in Food for Human Consumption" (Docket No. 2006F-0409) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4779. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Direct

Grant Programs" (RIN1890-AA15) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4780. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4781. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4782. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4783. A communication from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Department's Inspector General for the period of April 1, 2007, through September 30, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4784. A communication from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period ending September 30, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4785. A communication from the Inspector General, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report for the period ending September 30, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4786. A communication from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the competitive sourcing efforts of fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4787. A communication from the Chairman, National Capital Planning Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4788. A communication from the Executive Director, Morris K. Udall Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4789. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-227, "Department of Health Care Finance Establishment Act of 2007" received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4790. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-236, "Arbitration Act of 2007" received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4791. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-237, "Multi-Unit Real Estate Tax Rate Clarification Act of 2007" received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4792. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia,